

EDUCATION

I. BACKGROUND

In order to understand the changes brought about by the Communists in the educational system of China, it is necessary to review the background of educational development under the Nationalist regime.

642
871

Chapter II, Article 11, of the Nationalist Constitution promulgated in 1946 states that the "people have freedom of speech, [freedom for the] pursuit of knowledge, and [freedom of] publication." Article 21 of the same chapter further spells out the principle of education by stating that the "people have the right as well as the duty to receive basic education." Interpretations of these broad principles are found in Chapter XIII, which specifies, among other things, that the purpose of education includes the development of the spirit of nationalism, and that both public and private educational institutions are subject to government supervision according to law.¹

Nationalist official singled out two of the most controversial points for further elaboration.

871
656

1. Chung-kuo Chiao-yü Nien-chien 1948, [Educational Yearbook of China 1948], Shanghai, Commercial Press, 1948, pp. 23-24.

One is the so-called "spirit of nationalism" which the Ministry of Education at Nanking defined as the spirit based on San-min Chu-i, the Three Principles of the People expounded by Dr. Sun Yat-sen (See the chapter on Political Dynamics in the HRAF handbook on China as a whole.) Thus a mild social reform was adopted as the central theme of the Nationalist philosophy for education. The other controversial point is the extent of government supervision over educational institutions. Official explanations stressed the supervisory function of the government in the system of education and denied that this implied any authoritarian control.²

Under the Nationalist government, efforts were exerted to promote adult education and combat illiteracy. Outstanding records were made by such people as James Yen (an internationally known promoter of mass education) who organized drives to eradicate illiteracy, and Huang Yen-p'ei, now a member of the Communist central government, who did a great deal for the development of vocational education in China. Since most of these features of Nationalist education must have been covered in the HRAF handbook on China as a whole,* it is enough to say here that had it not been for a decade of war, general education in China would have been far more developed than it was

2. Ibid., p. 24. For other influential theories on education expounded during World War II in China see Chan-shih Chiao-yü Lun-chi [Discussions on Wartime Education], Shanghai, Sheng-huo chiao-yü she, 1938.

works in non-Communist countries.¹²

876

C. Changes in Organization

Before 1949, as the Communist Army assumed control of a city or a town, a military delegate was assigned to each school to supervise its administration. The changes the Communists brought to the schools at that time were imposed unsystematically and arbitrarily. Even after the establishment of the Peking regime, the measures designed to revise the educational system and school organization remained haphazard. Following the outbreak of the Korean war in 1950, the main activity of the Communist Ministry of Education, as far as reorganization of the schools was concerned, appeared to be the seizure of private schools and other schools sponsored by religious groups and foreign missions.¹³ The first systematic reorganization was occasioned by the issuance of a Government Administration Council directive, "Decisions Concerning the Reform of the Educational System," on October 1, 1951. The People's Daily of Peking, central organ of the Communist Party, and People's Education both

871
656

12. Wu-nien-lai Ti Kung-fei Chiao-yü [Communist Education in the Last Five Years], Sixth Section, Central Committee, Nationalist Party, 1955, Vol. II, pp. 14-15. A total of 6,360 schools were said to have been seized by the Communist.

13. For more information on revision and publication of textbooks in Communist China, see the chapters on "Public Information and Propaganda," and "Artistic and Intellectual Expressions." Also see Chu Po-ch'i, Chung-kung Ti Hsüeh-hsiao Chiao-yü [Formal Education in Communist China], Hong Kong, Yachou ch'u-pan-she, 1954, pp. 218-27.

expounded the theory behind the organizational reform:¹⁴ (1) the reorganization will ascertain the position of vocational schools, special training programs for cadres, and adult educational classes in the regular school system; in other words those cadres, soldiers, peasants, and workers who have had no opportunity for formal education may attend special training schools and achieve the same training as regular school graduates; (2) changing the six-year and two-level primary school system into a five-year and one-level system will enable children of poor peasants to receive a much more complete basic education; (3) the new system will place emphasis on technical education to serve the purpose of the "socialist reconstruction of China"; and (4) the kindergarten will have its definite place in the re-organized system.

871
656 •

Thus the reorganization was launched as the central task for education in China for 1952. By September 1952, it was reported, the major reorganization of schools was completed.¹⁵ However, the Communist Vice-Minister of Education, Liu Shih reported in January 1954 that "systematic reorganization of the

14. People's Education, October 1951, pp. 5-6; Hsia Feng, op. cit., pp. 2-3.

15. Kao Chien-hsing, Chung-kung Ti Nu-i Chiao-yü [Slave Education of the Chinese Communists], Hong Kong, Tzu-yu ch'u-pan-she, 1953, p. 36; Walter Crosby Eells, Communism in Education, Washington, D. C., American Council of Education, 1954, p. 201.

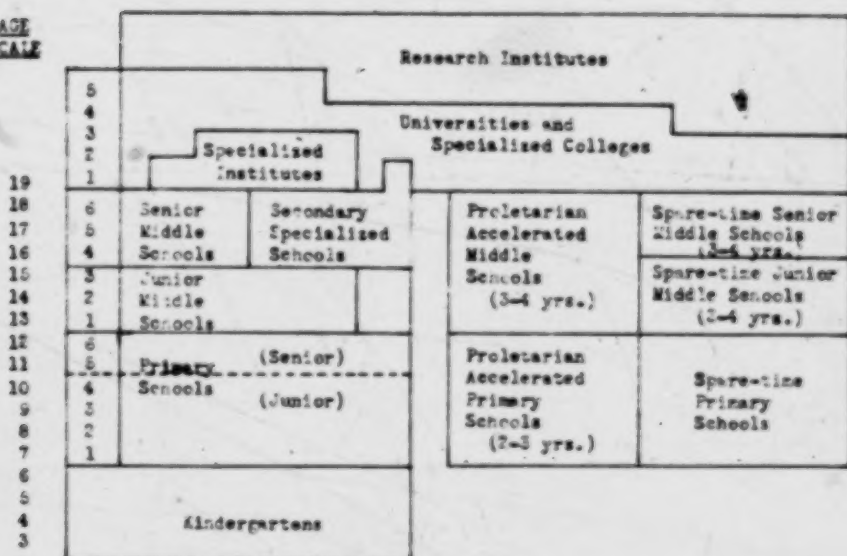
schools was not completed until late 1953.¹⁶ Liu, 871
in reporting on the completion of the reorganization, 656
possibly had in mind the decision of the Government
Administration Council in November 1953 to "restore
the old primary school system of six-years and two-
levels." According to Premier Chou En-lai, this
last action was necessary because of "inadequate
preparation" for the new five-year, one-level system.¹⁷

The main changes brought about in the reorgani-
zation were the regrouping of departments in large
universities and specialization in the colleges. The
purpose was to achieve a balanced distribution of
educational facilities as prescribed in the program
of national economic reconstruction.¹⁸ The system
of education after reorganization can best be shown
in the chart which follows.

16. People's Education, January 1954, p. 24.

17. Ibid., p. 8.

18. For a detailed description of the reorganiza-
tion, see People's Education, Jan. 1954, p. 65;
Communist Education in the Past Five Years, Vol.
II, pp. 14-15; Chung Shih, Higher Education in Com-
munist China, Hong Kong, Union Research Institute,
1953, pp. 41-47.

Chart 2. System of Education under the Chinese Communist Regime*

*Communist Education in the Past Five Years, pp. 8-9; Chi Tung-wei, Education for the Proletariat in Communist China, Hong Kong, Union Research Institute, 1964, p. 16. The Chinese term for "middle school" implies "secondary school."

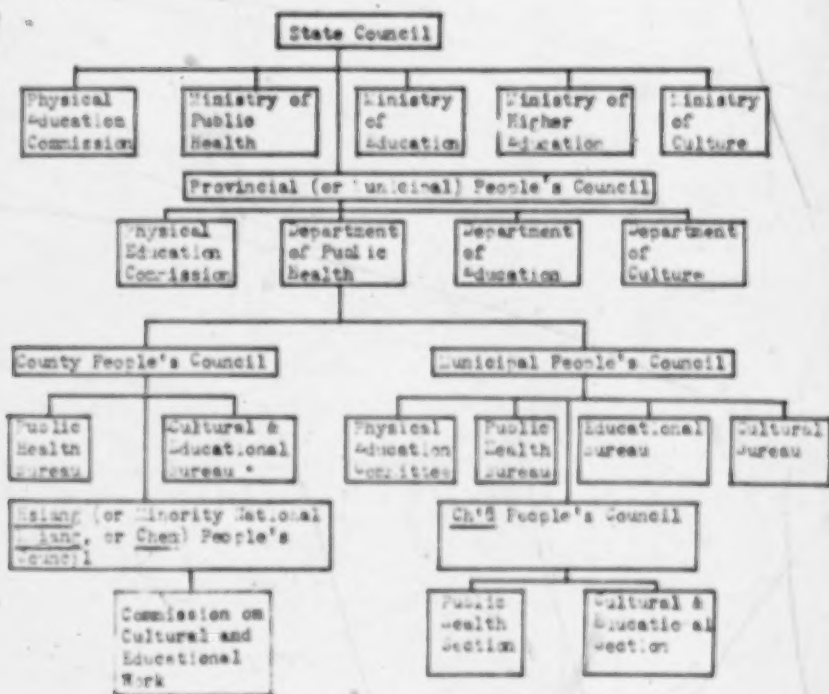
(Chart 2 faces p. 271.)

Following the reorganization of the school system, government control over the system was further defined by the promulgation of the 1954 Constitution. As shown in Chart 3, the formal chain of control is not much different from that of the Nationalist system. The following new features, of course, are to be noted: The two ministries of education function differently in that the Ministry of Higher Education is in charge of the education of higher and secondary levels of technical and administrative personnel to be used in the national reconstruction program, while the Ministry of education is responsible for the administration of teacher's training schools, regular middle (secondary) and primary schools, and adult education schools.¹⁹ Prior to the promulgation of the Constitution, education was under the jurisdiction of a Cultural and Educational Administration of the Government Administration Council. Now, under the State Council, culture and education are separated. The Ministry of Culture continues to supervise all "cultural activities" other than education, such as the press, publications, art, drama, and so forth. That physical education is worthy of an independent commission under the State Council indicates the important position it occupies in the Communist program of youth training.

One significant development in the control of education by the Communist government is the role played by the Party. Although the official chain of control as shown in Chart 3 seems to have no place

19. Communist Education in the Past Five Years, Vol. I, p. 11.

Chart 3. Communist Government Control of Education



* Communist Education in the Past Five Years, pp. 12-13. The term "Physical Education" used here can also be translated as "Physical Culture and Sports."

(Chart 3 faces p. 272.)

for the Communist Party. Party branches on all levels are actually the authorities for interpretation of official policy and have the final decision on how a school should be run. Evidence shows that some schools report every important question to the local Party secretary before taking any action.²⁰ Close-range Party supervision, together with the assignment of well trained veteran cadres to key positions on the administrative staff of the school, serve to maintain the Communists' control over the educational system.

871
656

III. MAJOR MOVEMENTS LAUNCHED BY COMMUNIST IN EDUCATION

A. "Thought Reform"

To effect an ideological revolution among the educators and students is an essential step in the Communist plan to "Sovietize" completely the educational system in China. Since 1949, every major measure adopted by the Peking regime in the cultural and educational fields involves, either implicitly or explicitly, an effort to remold the thought of the people concerned. However, an organized drive to change the way of thinking of the educators and students did not start until Premier Chou En-lai delivered his speech on September 29, 1951. He urged the educators to abandon their attitude of "study for study's sake" or "art for art's sake"

876

20. People's Education, December 1954, p. 30.

625
or an alley form a unit for the establishment of a committee. Under the security sub-station, which might have jurisdiction over several streets, security committees are linked to form a general committee with the sub-station chief as its chairman. The sub-station consists of a chief, deputy chiefs, and several policemen, who have been assigned to maintain public order and enforce decrees pertaining to it. These functions include the enforcement of laws on public security, the suppression of sabotage activities, the prevention and curbing of bandit activities and other criminal acts, the surveillance of counterrevolutionaries, census-taking, and the supervision of the security committees.

Security in factory, business enterprises, and other industrial organizations is the concern of committees established in each of these organizations. These committees are also expected to supervise every phase of industrial production and labor discipline.

625
656
The establishment of regulations governing the conduct of business in the Central-South Region helps to maintain control over all activities. For example, the regulation controlling the supply and sale of radio and electrical appliances³¹ requires each

31. The four regulations appeared under discussion in Yangtze Daily, Aug. 9, 1951, p. 4.

electrical shop to secure a permit from the security agency before requesting a license from the local Department of Industry. A monthly report of sales and a monthly inventory are also required. Failure to report suspicious patrons to the security agency is a punishable offense. Regulations governing the operation of hotels, warehouses, and recreational facilities follow the same rigid pattern. Owners first must have permits from public security agencies. The procedure regulating the issuance of permits requires the submission of the personal history of the owner, complete information concerning others involved in the business, and a diagram giving the geographic location of the shop or office. Hotels must make daily reports upon their guests, and recreational centers are subject to inspection at any time. Regulation of printing and engraving firms is very strict.³² These firms are obliged to secure a permit for operation, and their printing activities are subject to inspection by the security agencies. In addition to these regulations, commercial firms are subject to additional controls from other departments, including those in charge of public purchase and marketing.

B. Police

At the First Public Security Conference in Central-South China, previously cited, a call for

32. In addition to the 1951 published regulation, publisher and printing house are subject to a more rigid regulation, including the type of materials to be published and the sale of publications; Yangtze Daily, Aug. 21, 1952, p. 4.

instance, is required to attend meetings, enroll in winter or night schools, and participate in other group activities prescribed by the government. He must accept Party counsel on how to lead his daily life and how to spend his money. These impositions are time-consuming and irritating to those who must endure them. 668 517

Labor discipline controls all working hours. Any violation of discipline may provoke severe penalties. Technical schools, cultural classes and other group activities have been arranged for every worker. Since most workers hold membership in a number of Communist-led organizations, such multiple obligations leave them little leisure time, and their days pass in weariness and discontent.

2. Tax Burden and Business Restrictions

In the rural districts, the Communist San Ting Policy, formulated at the end of 1953, fixes quotas for farm production, purchasing, and marketing. This policy has aroused resentment. Measures which regulate the sale of farm surplus products -- mainly rice and cotton -- to the centralized market, also meet resistance. But the measure which has provoked the most discontent among the farmers is "deduction for services rendered by the government to the farmers." During the conversion of the old currency, the Communists in Kwangsi Province admitted that nine deductions were imposed on income.³⁴ These deductions included shares for the credit co-operatives, shares for the supply and marketing co-operatives, repayment of loans, bond subscriptions, and other items. 668 656 651

34. People's Daily, Peking, March 3, 1955, p. 3.

The businessmen do not fare any better. Sale, purchase, sources of supply, and market outlet are regulated and controlled. Government bonds must be purchased, and exorbitant taxation has been imposed. Trapped by restriction and taxation, many businessmen have been forced to abandon their enterprises. The general atmosphere is certainly not conducive to public confidence in the government.

3. Compulsory Services

The Communist government frequently drafts rural workers for public labor. For major irrigation projects, even farmers in distant areas are mobilized. The Ching River flood control project in Hupeh Province, for example, enlisted almost 200,000 "voluntary workers" from Central-South China.³⁵ To maintain a militia for emergency services, the government requires the young peasant to receive training in his spare time. When he is formally inducted into the militia, he is assigned to patrol the key centers in the village, guard and help to ship government grain, assist in combatting bandits, and take part in group activities organized for militia members.

A parallel scheme is instituted for urban residents, requiring them to render certain services in the areas of their residence. They must attend meetings and stand ready to be called for patrol duties. During 1951-53, citizens of Wuhan were ordered

35. Yangtze Daily, March 30, 1952, p. 1.

36. Ibid., March 4, 1953, p. 3.

to patrol the streets at night.

average of 25 per cent of the total retail trade in 1953, namely, 18 per cent of the retail trade in the cities and 30 per cent of that in the countryside. About 75 per cent of all the purchases by the co-operatives in 1953 were made on behalf of the state.⁷⁸ In most cases, purchases of raw materials and also such export items as cotton from Honan and Hupeh, hemp from Kiangsi, tobacco from Honan, tea from Hunan, silk from Kwangtung, and tung oil from Hunan were made through the co-operatives.⁷⁹

C. The Private Sector

With respect to private commerce, the State has adopted the policy of utilizing their "positive" activities and restricting their "negative" ones. At the same time, the state is leading them, allegedly at their own insistence on the road to state capitalism. In view of the monopolistic position of the state-owned trading companies, the private wholesale and retail dealers would be automatically squeezed out of business, or would be forced to act as distributing agents for the state-trading firms. In the cotton trade, for example, Section 4 of the "Temporary Regulation of the Supply of Cotton Yarn in the Central-South Area" announced

78. Ibid.

79. Ibid.

by the Central-South Military and Political Committee, provides a form of control over the cotton yarn and cloth market. In order to keep enough finished goods on hand and provide sufficiently for the market, the state-owned trading companies were allowed to control, according to their needs, a part or the whole of the products of private enterprises.⁸⁰ In Canton, public and private factories and the cotton textile merchants were required to register the amount of cotton cloth bought, produced, and kept in inventory. Private and public institutions were also required to apply to the Municipal Industry and Commerce Bureau for permission to transport their cotton goods to the suburb of Canton.⁸¹ Under these circumstances, the private cotton and cotton-cloth dealers were, naturally, forced either to change their occupation or to be reorganized to state capitalism.⁸²

After the abolition of about three million private peddlers in Central-South China, the supply of necessary commodities was curtailed, causing great inconvenience to the rural communities. The Ministry of Agriculture issued new directives to Party and government workers to allow the peddlers to handle all retail sales throughout the rural districts in order to stabilize the trade channels between city and rural areas.⁸³

80. People's Daily, Peking, Aug. 22, 1951.

81. Hsing-tao Jih-pao [Sing-tao Daily], Hong Kong, Oct. 12, 1951.

82. Ibid.

83. New China Monthly, Peking, No. 65, March 1955, p. 153.